



**Poland is torn apart by two narratives which for years have been forcing beliefs about our country and society.** After the fall of communism, liberal narrative was winning. It proclaimed private property as sacred and the highest virtue to be entrepreneurship and getting rich, while in the social sphere, individualism was its strongest point. In foreign politics, the aim was to integrate with the West, which meant joining NATO and the UE.

Despite changing governments and parties, liberal narrative dominated in one or the other form until 2015. Even the first PiS government (2005-2007) had not given it up. The change happened only when this party returned to power, when national-catholic ideas were brought forward. Conservative-catholic way of looking at social issues, nationalistic attitude to traditions, adoption of anti-European Union rhetoric prevailed. At the forefront there were words such as nation, community, white and red team. New historical policy started placing emphasis on the myth of the “cursed soldiers”.

The fight between the two narratives, for many brought misery and social exclusion. The liberals looked down on the people from villages and small towns, those who did not succeed at the times of transformations, people less educated and religious people. The victorious right rejected emancipation aspirations for women and minorities. Smear campaign was rolled out against educated elites, doctors, teachers. It denounced all who do not support the right, as ‘lefties’ and ‘traitors’. Mutual prejudices and blame are growing. Hate is flooding the media and with it, the people. You can try to join one of the sides, but what if neither of these rhetorics appeals to you?

What should Poland be like? What society? Maybe this is the time to build a vision of the country for the 21st century? Not only with the concern for our own interests, but globally.. Black clouds are building over horizon and all around us, first thunders are tearing the sky over our heads. What kind of Poland, what kind of Europe do we need for these times?

### **Just**

Firstly and most importantly, Poland should be just and egalitarian, not only in the context of the judiciary or individuals, but primarily in the social context. What does this mean? It means that all social groups should have the opportunity to have a decent life, to feel safe and to fulfil their aspirations. There should be equal access to health service and education. Taxes should be fair. Investments and state's interest in all regions should be equal. The laws should be just and fair – not made to suit a selected caste, not for those with connections, not for the wealthy and not even for the majority – but truly for everyone.

### **Be in solidarity**

Secondly, we cannot have some social groups set against other social groups. There is no war between the metropolis and the province, between the believers and non-believers, patriots and traitors, hard workers and loafers. The Republic should be a common concern, moreover, it should be joint and several. We have beautiful traditions of helping those who need help. We were in solidarity way back in the time of the People's Republic as well as after transformations, for example during the flood in 1997. We are in solidarity at the finale of WOŚP or other such events. Today, we should also be in solidarity with those who are losing homes in the wars or who are running away from hunger and climate changes. Solidarity does not only mean direct help here and now, it also means responsible climate policy, so that we could work together for our children and grandchildren to give them a chance to have the planet at least as good as we found it.

### **Creative**

Poland should also be creative, insightful and inquisitive of the world. Poland should look into the future. We should invest in educational revolution, not by putting education upside down again, but by changing the way of approaching educational process. Children and young adults should be given more freedom to choose what they really want to learn and the direction in which they wish to develop. We can't let schools kill their passions – these now are often nurtured outside the school. Young people and scientists in Poland live up to the expectation that we have a great potential in creating innovations. Unfortunately, without the help of the state many important innovations cannot be reali-

sed in Poland. One of the examples of such wasted opportunity, was cheap production of graphene. We could have been leaders in this promising sector, but things did not turn out this way.

### **European**

Poland should be European, because there is no other Poland. Talking loud about 'national interest' sounds good, but what can really provide us as a Nation, with security and independence? Isolation and conflicts with our neighbours? Conflicts weaken our position and being pushed to the margin of the UE, excludes us from key decision making in the European Community. Alone, we have no chance of success in the midst of the tractions among Russia, China and USA. As part of the European Union, we can influence the decisions of the greatest market in the world and take advantage of being a part of it. Let's not give up this opportunity because of our ill conceived sense of pride.

My dream is for the emergence of political power who will be able to creatively develop this vision of Poland. The power who can turn it into concrete projects and gain support of Polish women and men. We need the political formation in the elections who will not be promising to solve a handful of problems, promise something to everyone. We need the formation who will create a vision of future Poland – vision so tempting, that most of Poles would wish to make it happen.

Poland has to look to the future dealing with the best cards from her history. We can give a lot of good to the world, just as we did at the times of religious wars, being the example of justice in tolerance and respect for differences in people. Just as we gave the world "Solidarity" and helped to bring down the iron curtain. When we gave the world of science and art outstanding minds full of creative ideas, starting with Nicolaus Copernicus through Marie Skłodowska-Curie to Olga Tokarczuk. When we published the first Constitution in Europe which was supposed to keep us in the European family. Let's develop these national treasures and this Poland will indeed be great – just, in solidarity, creative and European. We will all be proud of such Poland.

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